



Why do U.S. presidential campaigns cost so much?



© AP IMAGES



- POLITICAL CANDIDATES MUST RAISE MONEY TO TRAVEL TO WHERE VOTERS LIVE.

The short answer is that it is expensive to communicate to a nation of 100 million voters for the 12 or more months that make up the presidential campaign season. U.S. presidential candidates must campaign at the national level as well as in the 50 states. This means that they must hire both national and state-level staff and reach voters in person and through national and local television, radio and social media. The proliferation of presidential primaries and caucuses has resulted in longer campaigns that involve more travel and paid advertising than in the past.

To campaign for office, a candidate needs to hire staff; arrange for office space and travel; conduct research; issue position papers; advertise on radio and television, in publications and on the Internet; and conduct numerous public appearances and fund-raising events.

Candidates for president have the daunting task of organizing their primary campaigns state by state and then, if nominated, their general election campaign throughout the nation. A candidate for the House of Representatives will campaign in his or her specific congressional district, while a Senate candidate must cover an entire state.